

BELOVED BY HER PEOPLE

If you ask the people who've worked closely with MarDee Xifaras how she pulled off leading the charge for the state law school, or any of her other impressive life accomplishments, they'll tell you she just has this remarkable ability to "connect" with people.

By the way, Xifaras has also been a Peace Corps volunteer in Africa; a fellow at the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at Tufts; an MBA from UMass Dartmouth; a grassroots political organizer and one of the moving forces behind Gerry Studds' first anti-war campaign for Congress.

Xifaras is startlingly, and charmingly, straightforward. She seems to understand that human beings are not perfect entities, and she has the ability to meet them where they live and inspire them to be better.

"It is the privilege of a lifetime to work with her," Ward said; "The quality of my life improved dramatically when I met her."

Jay Lynch, Xifaras' vice chairman on the SNESSL board, said that often it was only Xifaras' personal connections that kept the public law school dream alive.

"She never gave up on it," he said.

Xifaras succeeds, Lynch said, because she reaches people. She never badmouths folks, even opponents—either in public or in private—he noted.

"I think it was her unique ability to connect with everyone involved," he said.

Perhaps the most impressive endorsement comes from Michelle Keith, a 2009 graduate of SNESSL, and one of the mid-life law students for whom Xifaras seems to have fashioned the public law school.

Keith met Xifaras at a Women's Bar Association event, one of the many ongoing community events that Xifaras has made sure take place at SNESSL over the years.

Keith, a homemaker who had homeschooled her two children; said she went to SNESSL because she loves both Greater New Bedford and the school's public service ethic. She passed the bar on her first try.

She compares MarDee Xifaras to George Bailey in the Christmas film classic "It's a Wonderful Life." And she calls SNESSL the "Savings and Loan" bank that, in the classic movie, granted mortgages to low-income and middle-class people.

Xifaras, Keith said, really looks out for the school's students and advocates with them for public service to the community.

"There's a lot of successful people out there, but they go about it without any sense of honor," she said.

MarDee "has an inherent sense of honor and that's rare."

HONORING ROBERT JOSEPH PENCE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Robert Joseph Pence. Robert is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 397, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Robert has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Robert has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Rob-

ert has earned the rank of Assistant Patrol Leader. Robert has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Robert aided the City of Kearney, Missouri by repainting many of the town's fire hydrants.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Robert Joseph Pence for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING A REMARKABLE PUBLIC SERVANT, THE HONORABLE TOM VANDERGRIFF

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a remarkable public servant, the Honorable Tom Vandergriff. Judge Vandergriff began his 55 year long public service career as the youngest elected mayor of Arlington, Texas. There he made great strides to bring economic opportunity and expansion to the area with the luring of a General Motors plant, Six Flags theme park, and by bringing the Texas Rangers to the city.

These developments were no small task as it took thirteen years to bring Major League Baseball to North Texas and the positive effects can be felt through the vitality of Arlington as well as the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex to this day.

Six years later, he went on to become the first Congressman of the 26th district of Texas in 1983. Although he only served one term, he played a fundamental role in establishing the office and representing the district.

For more than 25 years, Vandergriff served as County Judge of Tarrant County which includes more than 1.7 million residents and is one of the most populous in the United States. He retired from his role in 2007.

It is my great honor to recognize Judge Tom Vandergriff for his dedication, innovation, and insight that he has contributed to the North Texas region. I will always remember those exciting radio broadcasts when Judge Vandergriff was "the voice of the Texas Rangers" in the 1970s. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends. He was a great public servant, and all North Texans are thankful for his servitude.

CREATING JOBS, NOT EXPLODING THE DEFICIT

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, day one of the 112th Congress and House Republicans are already violating their campaign promises and the needs of the American people. The set of rules they introduced today will explode our debt and deficit, kill our economic recovery and make the House of Representatives less transparent.

Like a lemming, the set of budget rules contained in this package will push us further off the deficit cliff. It breaks the promise so many

of us made to reduce the deficit and control the debt by refusing to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans and forces future generations to foot the bill. Over the cliff like a lemming; but I suppose there is nothing like a little lemming to go with tea.

Instead of transparency, this set of rules confers "King for a Day" status to one Member of the House of Representatives—allowing him to set the entire budget for the federal government without any public input.

The last time this country allowed that was never. Only before we were a country did a king set our budget. And now Republicans are set to give this authority again to one person, the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, a person I admire as a Member of Congress—as a King, not so much.

And, in the next few days, the new House majority wants to repeal help for seniors on prescription drugs and take away consumer protections from families battling insurance problems. This effort will add \$143 billion to the deficit over the next ten years.

This is all happening while we should be focusing on the economic recovery that is underway thanks to the tough decisions that the last Congress made. We need to redirect our focus to the economy and stop exploding the deficits and debt.

INTRODUCING THE SOCIAL SECURITY FOR AMERICAN CITIZENS ONLY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Social Security for American Citizens Only Act. This act forbids the Federal Government from providing Social Security benefits to non-citizens. It also ends the practice of totalization. Totalization is where the Social Security Administration takes into account the number of years an individual worked abroad, and thus was not paying payroll taxes, in determining that individual's eligibility for Social Security benefits.

Hard as it may be to believe, the United States Government already provides Social Security benefits to citizens of 17 other countries. Under current law, citizens of those countries covered by these agreements may have an easier time getting Social Security benefits than public school teachers or policemen.

Obviously, this program provides a threat to the already fragile Social Security system, and the threat is looming larger. The prior administration actually proposed a totalization agreement that would have allowed thousands of foreigners to qualify for U.S. Social Security benefits even though they came to, and worked in, the United States illegally. Adding insult to injury, this proposal could have allowed the Federal Government to give Social Security benefits to non-citizens who worked here for as little as 18 months. Estimates of what this totalization proposal would cost top \$1 billion per year.

Despite a major public outcry against extending Social Security benefits to those who entered this country illegally, a version of this proposal actually passed the other body in the